

Local Cultural Strategy Development for the City of Plovdiv - Bulgaria

a Case Study prepared by **Alena Alexandrova**
based on a **Policies for Culture** action project



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This case study was developed on the basis of the action project "*Construction of a local cultural strategy of the city of Plovdiv and setting up an effective structure for an active social dialogue*" implemented in 2001.

The project was initiated and put into action by the "European Cultural Month - Plovdiv 99" Foundation, the Cultural Department of the Municipality of Plovdiv, the Municipal Institute for Museum Activities – Plovdiv and the Ancient Plovdiv Trust, under the coordination of Vessela Ilieva.

1. Project Profile

Mission

The mission of the project¹ was to establish an effective long-term structure for social dialogue among the local decision-making bodies, cultural institutions, NGOs and cultural industries of Plovdiv. This dialogue should result in the development of new principles of cultural policymaking in Plovdiv, whereby the cultural actors become equal partners in the decision-making process in the field of cultural policy.

Goals

The project also aimed to revitalise Plovdiv's cultural life by designing a cultural strategy for the city and setting up a sustainable structure for dialogue. This structure would take the form of a new committee composed of elected cultural actors and policy makers. The project was conceived with the support of and in consultation with the local decision-making bodies and the main cultural actors in Plovdiv, as well as in partnership with the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, Romania, where a similar initiative has taken place in 2001. The cultural strategy and the model for its development are conceived to be applicable in other cities in Bulgaria.

¹ "Construction of a local cultural strategy of the city of Plovdiv and setting up an effective structure for an active social dialogue", initiated and implemented in the year 2001 in the framework of the *Policies for Culture* programme by the "European Cultural Month - Plovdiv 99" Foundation, the Cultural Department of the Municipality of Plovdiv, the Municipal Institute for Museum Activities – Plovdiv and the Ancient Plovdiv Trust.

2. Context and Environment

The *Policies for Culture* workshop "Decentralisation: investing in culture in the regions" (Bistritsa, 2001) identified several of the main problems in the development of Bulgaria's cultural policy over recent years. Its conclusions provided a snapshot of the social and institutional context in which cultural policy was being developed. Artists, professionals, and representatives from public institutions and NGOs voiced their opinions on the main issues needing to be addressed. Even though several new initiatives were launched in 2001 to deal with them, these issues formed the point of departure for the current project in Plovdiv.²

The Third Sector

Despite the growth of third sector organisations, it was noted that many seemed to work in isolation and that no shared space or instruments for dialogue were being created. The lack of reliable data regarding the cultural sector only added to the problem of miscommunication.

It was apparent that institutions did not make public their priorities, aims and objectives, nor their programmes to meet these. The policy-making process was also fairly unfamiliar to the cultural sector.

Although the media covered most important cultural events, it rarely included theoretical and political discussions of cultural policy issues.

Decentralisation

Decentralisation (abolishing the monopoly of the state) was one of the main principles on which the new cultural policy was based. Despite the efforts of central government, this process had not yet achieved satisfactory results.

Local authorities' approach to culture was very much event-oriented. Their capacity to set up long-term programmes for cultural activity was not adequately developed as yet. The goal of local authorities should be to develop a policy for achieving this.

Data on cultural consumption and participation should be gathered, analysed and used at local level. Municipalities should bear in mind that they were the closest public administration body to the people, and should therefore take advantage of this privileged position

Decentralised Funding

Municipalities were developing means of involving new partners in local cultural activities, and were becoming more active at seeking potential partners for financing culture. In addition to the established public grant system, municipal councils were identifying new alliances with the business sector, and new forms of joint financing had recently been set up.

The current arts funding system was predominantly based on the grant system. Since public funds for culture were scarce, and public grant dependency was preventing many cultural organisations from growing and finding their own means to generate income, new opportunities for fundraising should be explored. These should help identify new and creative mechanisms for funding culture. It was possible to raise alternative funds and make cultural organisations more independent, efficient and sustainable.

Training schemes for cultural and arts managers should include a new approach to cultural enterprise management. In the case of the South-Eastern European business sector, the benefits of investing in a cultural organisation should be outlined to as many potential sponsors as possible, since this was a relatively new form of collaboration in the region (especially for domestic entrepreneurs).

² Excerpts from the *Workshop Report* based on the proceedings of the *Policies for Culture* workshop "Decentralisation: investing in culture in the regions" held in Bistritsa, Bulgaria, 18-20 January 2001, by Cristina Puig Borrás.

3. Project Results

A Committee for Culture

One of the core aims of the Plovdiv project was to establish, through a series of workshops, a platform for dialogue between local administrators, artists, NGOs and local media. The idea was to develop a strategy to form the basis of the municipal policy in the field of culture. Issues such as the partnership between the Municipality and the independent cultural sector in the city were debated, as well as the need for the development of a database of cultural institutions and industries in Plovdiv.

One of the main results of the public debate was the election of a committee in which all the main actors in the field were represented. The committee functions as a public body, with the aim of developing a strategy for Plovdiv's cultural policy. It includes employees of some of the main cultural institutions; independent cultural organisations, cultural institutions dependent on state funding, and private cultural organisations are represented.

Committee Members

Anastas Badev – Deputy Mayor of Culture, Plovdiv Municipality

Johan Devletyan – Director, Cultural Directorate, Plovdiv Municipality

Daniela Djeneva – Art Director, Thracia Ensemble

Vessela Ilieva – Director, Municipal Institute for Museum Activities

Georgi Ivanov – Manager of Arts Centre - Plovdiv

Radka Koleva – Director, Regional Library *Ivan Vazov*

Alexandar Petkov – Director, A-Part Youth Theatre

Krassimir Linkov – Director, City Arts Gallery

Sonya Taushanova – Manager, Art and Culture for Children Foundation

A Strategy for Culture

The action project's main outcome was a strategy for the development of cultural life in Plovdiv. It is a final policy document which outlines the priorities and strategic vision of such a development. The strategy will be adopted by the Municipality as a basis for municipal policy in the field of culture. It consists of several components – priorities, investment policy and fundraising, and concrete activities – which will be the first steps in the implementation of the strategy. One of the main advantages of the strategy is that it addresses all the most important aspects of the city's cultural life, since it was written by a committee in which professionals from the various fields were represented.

4. The Strategy

Strategic Priority Lines

- 1. Development of a stable infrastructure** that will support cultural life in the city.
- 2. Cultural tourism development.** Using the potential of the rich cultural heritage to transform the city into an attractive cultural tourism centre. Securing access to local cultural monuments and developing cultural routes.
- 3. Coordination and communication** between cultural institutions. Establishing a link between the municipal and the state authorities with regard to cultural programmes and initiatives.
- 4. Developing audience strategy.** Devising and implementing projects for children and young people.
- 5. Taking consumers' needs into consideration.** Funding surveys of all cultural institutes (state, municipal, non-governmental) and organising a discussion about the published results. Reformulating priorities afterwards.
- 6. Partnerships.** Developing joint projects with cultural organisations at local, national and international level. Broadening the scale of international contacts in the cultural domain and securing inclusion into the Balkan Cultural Network.
- 7. Education of young artists.** Motivating them to stay in the city.
- 8. Territorial decentralisation** of cultural activities and initiatives. Setting up cultural departments in various districts and spreading the cultural scene from the centre to the suburbs.
- 9. Qualified staff.** Developing educational programmes related to the marketing of the cultural product.
- 10. Media as a partner** in the process of developing cultural activities. Rethinking relations between cultural organisations and the media, and developing joint initiatives.
- 11. Supporting new initiatives** and cultural entrepreneurship.³

Implementing Strategic Priority Lines

1. Measures for a Stable Infrastructure

- Build a multifunctional hall for cultural activities.
- Have a computer system in museums, libraries and other cultural institutions, connecting them to scientific- and cultural-information networks at both regional and national level.
- Reconstruct and renovate the City House of Culture to allow it to fulfil its designated functions.
- Develop and further establish the National Library 'Ivan Vazov' as an audio-visual and Internet centre at regional level and as the second biggest scientific centre in the country.

³ Excerpts from *Cultural Strategy for the City of Plovdiv*, 2002

- Establish, in cooperation with the Tourist Board, an Agency for Local Development, as well as private organisations giving cultural information to tourists.
- Reconstruct the concert hall 'Central Square'.
- Complete work on the Drama Theatre Plovdiv's chamber hall.
- Reconstruct the "Archeologicheski" subway, transforming it into a cultural-informational point.
- Complete the restoration and reconstruction of the Ancient Baths and their transformation into a permanent centre for contemporary arts.

2. Measures for the Development of Cultural Tourism and Preservation of Historical Heritage

A. Reconstruct and renovate the Archaeology Museum, 1 "Suedinenie" Square.

B. Restore, conserve and exhibit the remains and mosaics of the Bishops Basilica.
This would be on the basis of the new construction plan and the Municipality Board's decision to organise a competition and offer this area to private investors.

C. Establish the historic architecture site, 'Plovdiv', with the following major goals:

- Development of cultural tourism based on the concentration of rich cultural heritage in the area of "Old Plovdiv" and Central region;
- Development of abandoned areas;
- Restoration of the street of ancient crafts, Strumna Street;
- Reconstruction of buildings that host museums, galleries and exhibitions;
- Restoration, maintenance and establishment of an open museum at Nebettepe;
- Establishment of an archaeological complex, 'Tracian Philipopolis', at the square area of Vitosha Street;
- Restoration (including lighting) of the Antiquity Theatre, and the completion of its northern doors;
- Reconstruction of the Hisar Kapia;
- Installation of street-lighting and signs in the Old City, and renovation of the cobblestone pavement;
- Establishment of a Museum of Contemporary Plastic Arts in the grounds of the City Arts Gallery, 14 Suborna Street;
- Development of an approved strategy for the protection of the Old City;

D. Have new museums and hold new exhibitions:

- Museum of the artist Tsanko Lavrenov, in cooperation with the Tsanko Lavrenov Foundation;
- New permanent exhibition at the Archeology Museum;

- 'Plovdiv on the way to the contemporary world' exhibition in the Historic Museum;
- Museum of the various ethnic groups as a multifunctional centre in this sphere.

3. Coordination and Communication between Cultural Institutions

- Strengthen relations between cultural institutions and schools.* Develop the repertoire and activities of professional cultural institutions in coordination with school programmes.
- Include the forums and initiatives of Plovdiv's cultural calendar* in the national calendar of the Ministry of Culture: the International Chamber Music Festival, the International Theatre Festival, 'Scene on a Crossroad', the Verdi Opera Festival, the International Folklore Festival, the National Autumn Exhibitions, and others.
- Coordinate Plovdiv's cultural calendar* (state, municipal, NGOs, cultural industries) to avoid cramming too many major cultural events into a short time period.
- Give details of and support the initiatives of the various ethnic groups.*
- Extend international contacts and cooperation.* Organise experts' and artists' exchanges and form art links with fellowship cities. Organise new methods of exchange and cooperation, with the aim of attracting funding.
- Arrange a meeting of Plovdiv artists and cultural institutions* every three months to discuss current problems.

4. Audience Development

- Protect, further establish, and develop those cultural forums and initiatives traditional to Plovdiv.
- Re-establish amateur art activities in the cultural centres or else establish new clubs, for adults as well as children. Ensure the optimal use of space and reaffirm the role of traditional cultural centres.
- Invite both national and international stars to the productions of the Drama Theatre Plovdiv and the Plovdiv Opera Philharmonic society.
- Develop and introduce audiences to innovative and non-traditional art forms.
- Establish new cultural spaces and multiply cultural forums in the downtown area and in other areas of the city. Broaden existing areas, such as the Festival Open Scene and Film Nights in Philipopolis at the Antiquity Theatre.

Investment Policy and Fundraising

Financial support remains the key issue in solving existing problems and revitalising culture in the city. The new economic conditions, the state of the economy and the market, presented a need for identifying additional sources and methods of financial support, not only for State and municipal cultural organisations, but also for NGOs. The Protection and Development of Culture Act provided possibilities for financial support, but these have not been exploited.

Recommended measures include:

- Establishing a Municipal Fund, 'Culture', in accordance with the *Protection and Development of Culture Act*. Its main goal would be to support culture in all its varieties and forms;
- Permitting a delegated budget to municipal cultural institutions, where the necessary conditions exist;
- Selling municipal real estates, both cultural monuments and regular estates, around the territory of the Old City of Plovdiv. The income generated would go to the Culture Fund and be used for the improvement of the Old City's infrastructure. The major aim would be the attraction to the city of a higher number of tourists;
- Establishing a non-governmental cultural organisation that would participate with the Municipality. Its aim would be to perform profitable activities in accordance with the law and support the development of both purely cultural institutions and the business sector of culture (the cultural industries);
- Participating in international programmes and attracting foreign grant giving organisation;
- Creating a new, flexible, market-oriented price policy regarding State and municipal fees in cultural institutions.

The infrastructure, the material and technical conditions and their maintenance are of vital importance for the development of the culture in all its aspects. There are few major sites listed in the above sections that stand out as places, whose completion will contribute significantly to the development of the cultural life of the city.

Voices from the Field

"Many municipalities have the need to develop their own model, since they lack a specific model for development. The Ministry will take this as a specific case of what could be done on a local level, and will support the dissemination of the information about the project.

This will help the formulation of a more flexible policy with a European dimension. The Ministry is in the process of developing a national cultural strategy and the local models, with their priorities, will be integrated into the national strategy."

Antoaneta Ginina

*Director of the Regional
Cultural Policy Department
Ministry of Culture Bulgaria*

"The significance of the action projects which have been developed in the frame of the *Policies for Culture* is twofold. First of all, they open a space for debate, which is actually a process of lobbying and the beginning of co-ordination between the different bodies participating in the policymaking process.

Also, they educate or present effective European models of cultural management. This initiative is also a process of lobbying, and the state administration could learn from local initiatives and support new ideas in the future. Both of the action projects in the *Policies for Culture* programme will change the environment: they are system-building projects. The dissemination of the results by the Ministry of Culture would be difficult, since the municipalities are separate units. Here the role of the NGOs and information centres would be very important."

Rayna Gavrilova

Executive Director, Open Society Foundation Sofia, Former Deputy Minister of Culture Bulgaria

"The importance of the action project in Plovdiv lies in the fact that the team will identify the needs of the main cultural actors on the local level and propose a realistic policy to the Municipality of Plovdiv. That strategy will subsequently be included in the cultural strategy of the Municipality. The Ministry of Culture will be the recipient of the expert- and practice-based strategy. The Ministry could provide the Plovdiv team with expert help and advice, but cannot impose their decisions and vision on the development of the project."

Tsveta Andreeva

Junior Expert, International Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture Bulgaria, Local Project Coordinator of Policies for Culture

"The practical experience of developing a bottom-up strategy is important, since this model is unique and the dissemination of the results would be very important to other municipalities. The team in Plovdiv has to identify the priorities for the strategy; the Ministry will not intervene in that process. A basic priority in that process should be economic analysis and the development of a fundraising scheme. Also the infrastructure has to be strengthened and a way should be sought for the diversification of activities in the cultural sector."

Petar Miladinov

Senior Expert, International Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture Bulgaria

"One of the main priorities in the strategy is the creation of Fund Culture until the end of February, 2002. Also, the following main priorities were identified: development of the civil society and support for its activities; creation of a space for regular debate about culture; and finding new sponsors, besides the traditional ones. Another main priority is creating a stable infrastructure for the cultural institutions. The implementation of the strategy will be supported by the Municipality of Plovdiv for the next one and a half years."

Anastas Badev

Deputy Mayor of Culture, Plovdiv Municipality, Member of the Committee for Culture

"One of the priorities in the strategy is the creation of an information centre that fits in with the library as an organisation. It is a library of national importance, and the creation of an information centre there would have more than just a regional impact."

Radka Koleva

Director of the National Library "Ivan Vazov", Plovdiv, Member of the Committee for Culture

"The main achievement of the initiative was the following one: the participation, in an open debate, of the main cultural actors and potential sponsors in the policymaking process regarding cultural issues. Over a hundred people attended the first workshop and more than seventy-five registered. A major success was that a debate took place at all. It was one of the first local debates about the problems of culture. That allowed the participants to learn from each other and, most importantly, to define several priorities adapted to Plovdiv's specific context. Also, new potential sponsors were involved in the process, as well as traditional ones.

Many of the NGOs learned a lot from the workshop. It was not only a debate, but the beginning of a learning process that helped identify possibilities for future development, and for cooperating in joint actions."

Vessela Ilieva

Project Coordinator

"The central priority in the strategy is the territorial decentralisation and the development of initiatives and cultural events in the periphery of the city. In the process of writing the strategy, it was of crucial importance to identify the needs of local institutions. The coordination of programmes and events at a local level would be possible on the basis of a common strategy."

Biser Damianov

High School of the Arts, Plovdiv

George Trak

Manager of Art Centre Plovdiv

"The project opened a space for debate, which had been needed for a long time. Its most important role was to focus public attention on the field of culture and make culture a priority in municipal policymaking. Implementing it would involve lobbying not only the Ministry of Culture, but also the Ministry of Finance."

Yohan Devletyan

Director, Directorate for Culture of the Plovdiv Municipality, Member of the Committee for Culture

"The initiative in Plovdiv has come at the right moment and will have an impact on various levels. It has opened a space for local debate on cultural policy, and this also has national significance. The action project also gives the Ministry a chance to show, at international forums, that in Bulgaria decentralised, local initiatives for participative policy-making are being developed, which actively include the third sector. The project is seen as being an important part of the reform of cultural policy development. The Ministry is ready to support the initiative further, by taking it as a model and disseminating it among other municipalities."

Deyana Danailova

Director of the International Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture Bulgaria

5. Implementation and sustainability

The Municipal Council of Plovdiv will provide the practical implementation of these priorities. The committee and all cultural institutions' representatives (state, municipal, NGO), together with cultural industries and media representatives, will meet every three months to discuss the problems and needs identified throughout this period. The local government and the cultural actors aim to sustain the existing dialogue and to ensure the successful monitoring and implementation of the Strategy.

The strategy outlines the perspective for developing the initiatives of the separate cultural institutions in the city. Each institution will write its own detailed strategy, which will fit into the general one. The implementation of the 'micro-strategies' will be regularly discussed in the meetings of the Plovdiv committee.

The first step for implementing the strategy was the establishment of Fund Culture in the Municipality of Plovdiv. It will collect funds through the mechanisms defined by the Protection and Development of Culture Act. In addition, the Plovdiv Municipality will use a specific mechanism of rent concessions for buildings with 'cultural monument' status. The funds collected in this way will be used for preserving the city's cultural heritage, which is one of the main priorities of the strategy.

6. Impact of the Project

The action project as a policy initiative at local level had an impact in several respects: the development of an alternative cultural policy which coordinates the efforts of all important cultural institutions in the city; the establishment of a sustainable platform for dialogue between policymakers and professionals in the field of culture; the development of strategic planning skills in representatives of the cultural sector.

The project team's main role was to act as an agent of change that would establish a network of relations between NGOs, state cultural institutions, experts and professionals in the field. This local network opened a space for dialogue, which resulted in the creation of a detailed strategy for developing the city's cultural life. This last adapted the Municipality of Plovdiv's framework for local state policy in the field, which is one of the main achievements of the project. In addition, the initiative was important for the development of a culture of dialogue between policymaking institutions, professionals and the third sector.

During the workshops, which were a key part of the project's activities, representatives of many NGOs and other cultural institutions in the city began to think strategically and coordinate their programmes and visions for future development. The priority lines for development were formulated in these discussions. They included establishing a stable informational infrastructure which would allow better coordination within the cultural sector; setting up an alternative scheme for fundraising; and developing cultural tourism.

The action project is a unique initiative for the country and as such has national significance. The regional dimensions of the cultural policy are not presented in detail in the Ministry of Culture's current programme. Nevertheless, the development of cultural policy at regional level and cooperation with the third sector have been declared as priorities.

In this respect, the action project in Plovdiv is seen as an initiative that could provide the Ministry of Culture with a model for local policy development. One of the main advantages of such a model would be that it directly identified the needs of local cultural institutions. The Ministry would have a strategy for the development of cultural policy based on a bottom-up approach, one that could be applied in other regions of the country.

7. A Model for Local Cultural Strategy Development

Most of the policy development initiatives at local level have three relatively separate dimensions: advocacy; research and needs assessment; coordination of project activities and teamwork.

Advocacy

The advocacy dimension was essential to the action project. The strategy developed should be seen as a framework for developing concrete initiatives, to be carried out in cooperation with the main participants in the city's cultural life. The team had the important task of developing an advocacy campaign which dealt with relations with state institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Plovdiv. This was in order to secure the representation of the interests of the main cultural actors in future policymaking.

- An important part of each advocacy initiative is the development of a network of relations on horizontal and vertical levels. The horizontal level includes coalition building and the identification of the main individuals, institutions and NGOs who will support the initiative. The vertical level includes identifying key figures in the state institutions whose responsibilities are relevant to the initiative, and establishing relations with them. Communicating with experts who could provide advice related to the various aspects of the policy initiative is an essential part of the networking process. In the specific example of the action project, the main components of the advocacy part could be described as follows:
- The network resulted from a series of organised debates in which virtually all professionals in the field of culture participated, including key figures in the policymaking process, potential sponsors and journalists. This allowed the organisations' main problems to be discussed and the participants to learn from each other. Most importantly, it enabled several priorities adapted to the specific context in Plovdiv to be defined. In terms of networking, two main results followed: the coordination of the initiatives of independent cultural institutions and the formulation of the main problems of state institutions that need to be addressed.
- In the particular case of the action project, the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the networking process were combined in the election of a committee that included representatives from state institutions and the third sector. This committee is important in several respects. It represents the interests of the local community. In that sense it has become the legitimate body for proposing a framework for developing concrete policies. It also includes representatives of state institutions: this will guarantee both the representation of the point of view of policymakers and the implementation of the strategy.
- The links on the vertical level are a key part of any advocacy initiative or attempt to influence the decision making process. The team was regularly in touch with key figures in the Municipality of Plovdiv and with the Ministry of Culture, and invited their representatives to all workshops. This guaranteed the implementation of the strategy's main priorities. It also meant that the expertise of the representatives of state institutions helped to define those priorities.
- The media play a very important role in the development of public initiatives. It is a double role: on the one hand, they give publicity to initiatives, helping to emphasise the importance of culture in public life; and on the other hand, they influence the decision making process at the level of state policy. For these reasons, it is crucially important to establish relations with journalists who could present the importance of the initiative in an adequate way.

Key Factors of Advocacy

- Identification of coalition partners
- Identification of people in the state institutions relevant to the initiative's responsibilities
- Identification of journalists specialising in the field; keeping them informed
- Identification of experts

Research and Needs Assessment

Importantly, the action project carried out research aimed at identifying the vital cultural NGOs and describing the city's cultural industries. A needs assessment process, identifying the most important issues to be addressed in future policy, was also undertaken. An additional result of the project was that the invited NGOs began a process of learning and development in strategic thinking. They have done SWOT analyses to help them identify the requirements of future development and undertake cohesive action.

Teamwork

Teamwork is an important aspect of policy initiatives aimed at networking and the coordination of many different participants. To a great extent, it is the factor which usually determines the success of a project. There are more successful and less successful ways for teams to work, and typical problems that are encountered. In this case, the teamwork model was as follows. The project coordinator, assisted by the team, carried out all project activities (research, coordination and organisation of events). The elected Committee, a separate body, was responsible for developing the final strategy. The project's coordinator, Vesela Ilieva, participated in the development of the strategy and the coordination of communication within the network, dealing with those experts and professionals involved. Each member of the Committee made analyses and suggestions, and final decisions regarding strategy priorities involved the participation of all members.

The team encountered some difficulties. Significant efforts were invested in developing the style of teamwork, and ensuring the active involvement of the various participants. The project coordinator, being the person responsible for the project's vision and philosophy, had a very demanding role. Her position required her to take on many tasks, and the other team members expected her to formulate the strategy's main priorities, which was not in fact the coordinator's role. In future, therefore, the development of similar initiatives should set out a clear scheme for teamwork.

Key Factors of Teamwork

- Adequate distribution of responsibilities
 - Clear definition of the leadership's role
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8. Follow Up and Future Perspectives

The organisation of courses in cultural management and team building was proposed as a follow-up activity. A possible follow-up activity directly related to the strategy's priorities would be the establishment of several information centres within various cultural organisations in the city. These would play a key role in creating an effective informational infrastructure in the field of culture. In addition, an agency with the status of NGO, but which has an input from the Municipality, will soon be founded. It will mediate between the business and cultural sectors, and it will be able to apply for funding and implement projects.

As one of the first in the field, the initiative set new aims and identified the main issues related to the development of cultural policy in Plovdiv. The strategy is currently too general and includes virtually all aspects of the city's cultural life. A precise selection of priorities and a step-by-step implementation plan with time lines are needed. An important question that has to be answered in the near future is how to fund the priorities in the strategy from the newly established Fund Culture. Apart from the preservation of cultural heritage, there is no explicit definition of how the priorities will be supported by Fund Culture. The initiative needs to establish a mechanism to ensure that the committee meets regularly. The project team might not be responsible for organising future activities, and so a framework for their implementation needs to be defined.

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